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Testimony Regarding HB 5037 - Dental Reimbursement Rates

Abbas Mohammadi, DDS, Columbia Dental

Senators Kushner, Cicarella, Osten, Hartley, and Miner, Representatives Abercrombie, Betts, Walker, Dathan, Nolan, and France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Abbas Mohammadi and I am a registered voter in Manchester, CT.

I am testifying in my role as President and owner of Columbia Dental with 13 offices throughout the state.

The proposed increased reimbursement rates for adults seeking dental treatment on HUSKY are greatly appreciated, especially the proposed endodontic rate matching the children's rate. However, we are concerned the 25% increase is too small to increase provider participation. **In order to increase provider participation in Medicaid, adult dental reimbursement rates need to be increased to parity with the child rates.**

I kept offices open for urgent and emergent care to treat odontogenic infections and other oral issues as an alternative to going to the overcrowded hospital emergency rooms to slow down the spread of Covid-19 when the governor closed the state. I treated a tremendous amount of HUSKY patients as a result. I saw it as my civic duty. As things are becoming closer to normal the HUSKY reimbursement is driving me to close my offices to HUSKY. I cannot sustain treating these patients in a manner I was not taught which means treating to save the tooth, not extract it. The rules and reimbursement for HUSKY are unsustainable both medically and fiscally. When it costs me to treat a HUSKY patient, I believe I have given my fair share to the state.

I urge you to increase the adult Medicaid reimbursement rates to bring them to parity with the child Medicaid rates. This will allow family dental practices to accept Medicaid patients of all ages, expanding the network and improving access to care.

We look forward to continuing this conversation about how we can best provide comprehensive dental care to Connecticut's low-income residents. Thank you for your time and for supporting access to care in Connecticut.

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